

In the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the subject application.

1. (Currently Amended) A biodegradable nonwoven web having a permeability within the range of about 500 to about 1500 μm^2 and a void volume that is greater than about 25 cm^3/gram , wherein the web comprises

a. a first biodegradable binder fiber that does not undergo severe heat shrinkage and

b. a second biodegradable thermoplastic fiber having a melting temperature at least about 20°C. higher than the melting temperature of the first biodegradable binder fiber; and wherein the biodegradable nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature within about 20° C above the melting temperature of the first biodegradable binder fiber, using only convective heating to thoroughly bind the web and to achieve the permeability and void volume.

2. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the first biodegradable binder fiber is a multicomponent fiber comprising a surface component and a non-surface component.

3. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the surface component has a melting temperature at least about 10°C less than the melting temperature of the non-surface component.

4. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web of claim 3, wherein the second thermoplastic fiber has a melting temperature at least about 20°C. higher than the melting temperature of the surface component of the multicomponent fiber.

5. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web of claim 3, wherein the surface component comprises L,D-polylactide (LD-PLA), or a polylactide-caprolactone copolymer.